

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

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R 060500Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2543

INFO AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 0273

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, TC

SUBJECT: DESALINATION FACT FINDING MISSION

REF: A. STATE 15747 B. ABU DHABO 97 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY WELCOMES MISSION AND IS GRATIFIED THAT U.S. COMPANIES INTERESTED COMPETING IN MARKET DOMINATED BY EUROPEANS. ALTHOUGH UAE HAS ENORMOUS POTENTIAL NEED FOR DESALINATED WATER, GROUP WILL FIND ALMOST NO LONG-RAGE PLANNING FOR DESALINATION PROJECTS BEYOND SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITY REPORTED REF B. FURTHERMORE, ONLY TWO OR THREE UAE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SUFFICIENTLY INFORMED TO GIVE GROUP ANY USEFUL INFORMATION. IN ADDITION TO GENERAL FACT FINDING, MISSION SHOULD CONSIDER ASSEMBLING BID ON UMM AN-NAR POWER-DESALINATION PROJECT. END SUMMARY.

2. IF PRESENT CONTRACTS AND TENDERS EXECUTED ON SCHEDULE, ABU DHABI WILL BE PRODUCING 40 MILLION GALLONS PER DAY DESALINATED WATER BY END OF 1980. PLANS FOR UMM AN-NAR PROJECT (REF B) ALLOW FOR ADDITIONAL 32 MGD BY 1985 IF NEEDED. BARRING ANY VAST, UNFORESEEN INCREASES IN DEMAND, THESE PLANNED PROJECTS WILL PRODUCE ALL THE FRESH WATER REQUIRED BY ABU DHABI EMIRATE, ALTHOUGH DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS WILL
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CERTAINLY EXIST.

3. UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, EMBASSY SEES FOLLOWING
AREAS OF POTENTIAL INTEREST FOR MISSION:

A. PLANS FOR SUPPLYING REST OF UAE WITH DESALINATED
WATER. OTHER EMIRATES MAY BUILD OWN FACILITIES, OR
ABU DHABI MIGHT SUPPLY THEM DIRECTLY FROM ITS OWN
SURPLUS PRODUCTINN. MISSION WILL, HOWEVER, HAVE
DIFFICULTY OBTAINING PRECISE INFORMATION ABOUT SUCH
FUTURE PROJECTS. EVEN IN ABU DHABI, WHERE PLANS FOR
DESALINATION FACILITIES WELL ADVANCED, PLANS FOR
DISTRIBUTION AND EVENTUAL USES OF THIS FRESH WATER
ARE MUCH LESS PRECISE.

B. MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF PLANNED NEW FACILITIES.
PRESENT PLANTS NOW OPERATED WITH DIFICULTY AND LARGE
NEW UNITS WILL IMPOSE GREAT BURDEN ON OGVERNMENT'S
LIMITED TECHNICAL RESOURCES.

C. SUPPLYING FACILITES ON EMERGENCY BASIS TO OVERCOME
OTENTIAL WATER SHORTAGE THIS SUMMER.

D. ASSEMBLING BID ON UMM AN-NAR PROJECT. ALTHOUGH
OFFICIAL CLOSING DATE IS MARCH 19, IF OUTSTANDING
FIRMS MENTIONED PARA 2 REF A SERIOUSLY INTERESTED
BIDDING, WATER AND ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT WOULD
PROBABLY BE WILLING GRANT EXTENSION. OBVIOUSLY,
U.S. FIRMS PARTICIPATING THIS PROJECT WILL BE IN
EXCELLENT POSITION TO RESPOND TO FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES
THAT EMERGE FROM AD HOC PLANNING PROCESS HERE.

4. U.S. FIRMS WILL HAVE TO JUDGE WHETHER POTENTIAL
BUSINESS -- EITHER SPECIFIC UMM AN-NAR PROJECT OR
MORE GENERAL FUTURE ANTICIPATED NEEDS -- JUSTIFIES
MISSION STOP ABU DHABI. IF DECISION MADE TO COME,
EMBASSY SHOULD RECEIVE SUFFICIENT ADVANCE NOTIFICATION
GROUP'S SCHEDULE. SINCE NO MORE THAN TWO OR THREE
OFFICIALS IN ENTIRE UAE CAN SPEAK WITH AUTHORITY ABOUT
DESALINATION PLANS, ESSENTIAL THAT THESE OFFICIALS BE
AVAILABLE TO MEET WITH MISSION MEMBERS DURING THEIR
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SCHEDULED VISIT.
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